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ABSTRACT

A study explored the relationship between the functional communication patterns occurring in conflict and post conflict impressions of relational concern. The first part of the study involved the development and testing of an instrument to measure perceived relational concern, while the second part investigated whether varying styles of functional communication behaviors affected postinteraction impressions of relational concern in interpersonal conflict. Subjects were 36 college students, each of whom was assigned to one 15-minute interaction with another subject. Following the interaction, each subject completed the relational concern measure of his or her partner's concern. The interactions were videotaped and the behaviors of the participants coded by trained observers. The results supported the premise that communication functions are instrumental indicators of pragmatic relational information. Postinteraction impressions of relational concern were shown to be related to functional communication behaviors, suggesting that styles of presentation of communication functions affect pragmatic relational perceptions of interactants. It was also shown that social actors can discriminate between levels of relational concern in interpersonal conflict and that communicators in such situations use differing presentational styles of communication function. (Copies of materials used in the study are appended.) (FL)

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FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AND RELATIONAL CONCERN IN INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

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Functional Communication Patterns and

Relational Concern in Interpersonal Conflict

Relational concern in interpersonal conflict is a broadly based concept involving cooperativeness. Mack and Snyder (1957) developed a cooperativeness dimension that was subsequently tested by Ruble and Thomas (1976). Filley (1975) has expanded this dimension to include concern for maintaining the relationship between the conflicting parties beyond the conflict interaction. A person, therefore, will adopt a conflict style or strategy which varies along two continua: low to high personal goals orientation (assertiveness) and low to high relationship maintenance orientation (cooperativeness). Hall (1969) proposed and demonstrated a similar orientation. Hall, Filley, and Mack and Snyder suggest that a person's orientation along self versus relationship dimensions affects the participant's post-interaction impressions of the other. Moreover, Ruble and Thomas (1976) report that the degree of cooperativeness evident during conflict is a strong predictor of post conflict impression.

Extensive research has been conducted concerning goals or self orientation in conflict (see Rapoport, 1974; Blake & Mouton, 1964; and Deutsch, 1969), but little attention has been paid to the dynamics of the relational orientation. Further, little research has investigated the effects of relational orientation on the formation of post-interaction impressions.

Conflict style and relational concern are linked in fundamental ways. Since links have been established between the transmission of pragmatic relational information and post-interaction impressions, the relational orientation of the persons in conflict seems to be a sensible construct. If functional communication behaviors affect post-interaction impressions transmitting relational information, then Filley's metric of how concerned a conflicting party is with maintaining the relationship should be sensitive to varying style of relational information presentation.

Conflict research indicates that differing overall styles of conflict behavior lead to differing post-interaction impressions of interactants with regard to attraction (Oltman et al., 1975; Folman, 1973), control (Danziger, 1977), and liking (Thomas & Kilmann, 1975). Unfortunately, these studies do not examine specific behaviors within the conflict interaction in relation to post-interaction impression. Investigations of this nature would entail two assumptions. First, persons can consciously recall or recreate the unique elements of a conflict situation (that is, given the command, "Think of a typical conflict," one can do so). Second, one can identify conflict behaviors which produce differing impressions in a type-token paradigm; that is, when one is given an example of some conflict behavior, s/he can identify that behavior as the type of behavior which produces the same impression as other behaviors in that class.

Empirical evidence from a number of different areas suggests that pragmatic or relational information in human communication is transmitted by "functional" communication behaviors. In current literature "functional" communication behaviors are seen as "appropriate" behaviors which meet the "demands" of the situation (Larson et al., 1978). This conceptualization of "functional" communication behavior commands a great deal of latitude when contemporary researchers attempt to operationalize the terms "appropriate" and "demand" for a particular situation. Skinner (1957) strictly operationalzed the notion of "functional" communication behaviors by maintaining that all communication behavior was functional and that all meaning in communication was derived from functional cues. Within this perspective Skinner developed a comprehensive taxonomy. McLeish and Martin (1975) successfully adapted Skinner's formulation of six categories into a ten category system by including four types of behaviors suggested by Bales (see McLeish and Martin, 1975). Within this coding system, communication units may function as Mands, Tacts, Extended Tacts, Echoics, Intraverbals, or Autoclitics. The five types of

Autoclitics include Dominant Control, Submissive Control, Informative, Positive Affective, and Negative Affective. McLeish and Martin have demonstrated that all possible functions of communication units may be identified satisfactorily within the system.

The relationship between the functional communication patterns occurring in conflict and post conflict impressions of relational concern has not been explored. Consequently, this study addressed the following question: what differences, if any, in functional communication behavior distinguish levels of post-conflict impressions of relational concern?

Hypotheses

Hypotheses concerning the relationship between functional communication behaviors and post-interaction impressions of relational concern are based on a compound premise. If there are differing styles of conflict behavior which lead to differing impressions of relational concern, there should be differing presentational patterns of relational information within the interpersonal conflict situation. The research hypotheses growing out of this assumption is that there are identifiable differences in the use of functional communication behaviors in interpersonal conflict which lead interactants to form different impressions of one another's relational concern. Prior to testing the main hypothesis, it was hypothesized that differing levels of relationship maintenance concern can be identified, and two preliminary hypotheses concerning functional communication behaviors were advanced:

H_1: Subjects will enact differing levels of functional

communication behaviors in an interpersonal conflict situation.

H_2: Frequency patterns of functional communication change over time in interpersonal conflict.

The main research hypothesis was:

H_3: Functional communication behavior usage is associated with perceived levels of relational concern at a level above 50%.

A test of this hypothesis entailed an assessment of the relationship between the subject's rating of relational concern and their use of functional communication behaviors. It was predicted that the degree of association between a subject's ranking on the relational concern measure and the functional communication categories would exceed 50 percent. If this condition was met, the functional communication behaviors would be considered informative predictors of post-interaction (conflict) impressions of relational concern.

Method

The primary thrust of this research was to identify relationships, if any, between post-conflict cognitions about communicators and specific observable behaviors enacted by those communicators. This research, then, had a two-fold purpose: first the development of a reliable measure of perceived relational concern, and, second to match communication behaviors occurring during interpersonal conflict with the relational measure. Phase I of this research involved the development of the measure. Phase II involved the test of the hypothesis.

Phase I

Subjects

Subjects for the testing and development of the relational concern measure were 100 undergraduate students enrolled in a basic interpersonal communication course. Student volunteers received course credit in return for their participation. The relational concern instrument was completed by 67 females and 33 males. The initial test group consisted of 18 males and 22 females.

Scale Items

On the basis of the types of behaviors described by Filley (1975), Marwell and Schmitt (1967), and Roloff (1976) as indicative of differing types of orientations in interpersonal conflict, a set of twenty-five statements describing behaviors which might occur in an interpersonal conflict were constructed (see Table 1). These statements were believed to represent (be tokens of) the full range of relational concern indicators along a high-low continuum. The statements presented to the final test groups were unchanged from their original form.

Scale Development

Initially, forty students rated twenty-five statements on an eight point scale ranging from high (8) to low (1) concern for relationship maintenance during interpersonal conflict. The ten statements which received the highest frequency of rating at each level of the scale were submitted to sixty different students with the same instructions provided to the initial group (see Table 2).

Data Analysis

The ratings by the second group of sixty students were subjected to a Guttman Scale routine. This analysis identified

those items representing the best-fit of a trace line for Guttman scaled items. The instrument development process was not considered complete until eight items with a coefficient of scalability of at least .60 and a coefficient of reproducability of at least .90 were identified.

Phase II

Subjects

Thirty-six students were selected from those volunteering for participation in Phase II of the research. There was no subject overlap between Phase I and Phase II of the research. Students received course credit in return for participation and participated on a first come, first serve basis until thirty-six subjects were obtained; twenty-three females and thirteen males. Students ranged in age from eighteen to thirty-four.

Procedures

Each subject was assigned, without regard to sex, to one fifteen minute interaction with another subject. The final sex-mix of the dyads was: two male/male; seven female/female, and nine male/female. Upon arrival, subjects were introduced to one another and informed that their interactions were going to be videotape recorded. The experimental instructions were read to the subjects and they were provided with a copy of the case study. At the end of the fifteen minute period, the subjects completed the relational concern measure (RCM) of their partner's concern. After all interactions were complete, subjects were debriefed.

The conflict stimulus followed the game theoretic mixed-motive model proposed by Gallo and McClintock (1965) and resembled the

"prisoner's Dilemma" exercise (see Frost and Wilmot, 1977)[1]. The stimulus scenario was created by the experimenters and pretested in several communication classes. The videotaped interactions were coded by sets of three coders drawn from a pool of seven graduate students in speech communication. The coders were trained in the coding procedure and paid for their participation.

The coding procedure was as follows: using the "pause" mode of a Sony 3600 videotape playback unit, the experimenters stopped the tape of an interaction at five second intervals. The coders were instructed to code simultaneously the behavior of each participant per five second interval into the best category for the behavior. The "best" category was defined as the dominant function of the behavior in question. The videotape was then restarted and the procedure repeated until the entire interaction was coded.

Category System

The coding scheme was a ten category system developed by McLeish and Martin (1975). The system is based on Skinner's (1957) communication function theory (see Table 3).

Relational Concern Measure (RCM)

A second group of dependent variables were produced by the Relational Concern Measure (RCM). Interactants rated one another on the RCM in a mixed-standard format (see Blanz & Ghiselli, 1972). Within this format, items 2,4,6, and 8 from the Guttman scaled RCM were interspersed with eleven "dummy" items. Subjects were instructed to rate their partner on these items as: being worse than an item (-), equal to the item (0), or better than the item (+) (see Table 4). Mixed-standard rating produced a single

relational concern value for each member of the dyad. In the Mixed-Standard format a person, A, who rates a person, B, as + on scale item 2, + on scale item 4, - on scale item 6, and - on scale item 8, will be considered assigning a value of 5 to person B. A value of 5 indicates that had A rated B on the original 8 Guttman Scale, A would have indicated that B's relational concern was best typified by item/statement 5. Blanz and Ghiselli (1972, p. 186) indicate that with this system scale reliability problems and halo effects are minimized.

Data Analysis

The frequency data for the ten functional categories across the thirty-six subjects was analyzed by X^2 (see Siegel, 1956). Three X^2 tests were performed. First, the frequency data were subjected to analysis in a ten by thirty-six matrix to determine intersubject/category differences. Second, an analysis was executed to determine intercategory differences. Third, the total frequencies for all subjects in three five minute segments of interaction were submitted to X^2 analysis to determine differences, if any, between these time intervals.

The relationship between the functional communication behaviors and subjects' ratings on the RCM was determined by means of Freeman's (1965) Coefficient of Differentiation (θ). θ was computed for each category across all subjects and eight possible ranks on the RCM. A value of .50 or higher for the average category θ values was interpreted as support for the primary research hypothesis.

Results

Guttman Scale Analysis

The results of the initial analysis, presented in Table 2, indicate that the best eight items were: 1, 5, 10, 11, 13, 14,

20, and 24. Two additional statements were chosen for further analysis: 9 and 19. These items merited inclusion because either their favorable standard deviations or skewness values were sufficient to consider them likely alternatives for the chosen items at their mean rating levels; in other words, 9 could be substituted for 1, and 19 could be substituted for 5.

The mean ratings for the ten items submitted to the second test group of 60 subjects are presented in Table 5. Forcing subjects to choose among fewer items did not substantially change the mean ratings for the items. The eight items whose means suggested that the items were the best candidates for each level of the eight-level relational concern scale were submitted to SPSS Guttman Scale analysis with the following "cut points:" item 1=1, item 20=2, item 14=3, item 5=4, item 10=5, item 13=6, item 24=7, and item 11=8. This analysis yielded an eight point scale with a Coefficient of Reproducibility of .96 and a Coefficient of Scalability of .49. Althought the Coefficient of Reproducibility fell within acceptable limits, the Coefficient of Scalability was considered unacceptable as it indicated that at least one item did not follow the step-by-step hierarchial pattern required in a Guttman Scale.

Six of the items and the two alternative items (9 and 19) were subsequently submitted to Guttman Scale analysis with the following cut-points: item 9=1, item 20=2, item 14=3, item 19=4, item 10=5, item 13=6, item 24=7 , and item 11=8. This analysis produced an eight-point Guttman Scale with a Coefficient of Reproducibility of .97 and a Coefficient of Scalability of .78. Both of these values fell well within the acceptable range for a Guttman Scale.

Chi Square Analysis of Functional Communication Behaviors

Reliability coefficients for all dyads are presented in Table 6. The coefficients ranged from .76 to .95. The coding procedure was considered acceptable and the coded behaviors were subsequently analyzed according to the procedures described.

The frequency data for all subjects was arrayed in a ten by thirty-six contingency table (see Table 7) and a chi-square test executed. The obtained X^2 (1271.56) exceeded the tabled value at the .05 level of confidence (X^2 = 857.67. df=315, $p < .05$). This value indicates that the obtained frequencies were not due to chance variation. It was unclear, however, whether the independence of the frequency data was due to subject or category parameters. Therefore, the frequency data were partitioned into ten 1 by 36 contingency tables. The Chi-square test was applied to each of these tables. Table 8 presents the results of each of the separate X^2 analyses for the ten functional communication categories. The results indicate that subjects were independent in their use of the functional communication categories in all except the Echoic category. Further partitioning of the frequency data was considered warranted by the independence of subject's category usage.

Eighteen 2 by 10 contingency tables were anlyzed by means of the X^2 test. The tests were for the eighteen dyads under investigation. Table 9 displays the results of this analysis. Subject category usage was significantly different in 14 of the 18 dyads with α = .05 (df = 9 per dyad). Analysis was conducted

with the more restrictive level due to the marginal X^2 values obtained for dyads 4, 18, 16, and 19 in the original analysis. An additional 4 dyads fell outside of the rejection region for an H_0 with an $\alpha = .01$.

Relational Concern

The final relational concern value assigned to each subject was based on responses to the Mixed-Standard Rating Scale. These values are presented in Table 10. Only two of the subjects deviated from the general pattern when rating their partner in the conflict interactions. Blanz and Ghiselli (1972) suggest that in the event subjects deviate from the normal rating order, the experimenter may either drop the deviant rating or average all ratings (p. 189). The averaging method was chosen to deal with the deviant ratings. Subjects 20 and 28 both exhibited the same rating pattern (Item 2 rated +, Items 4 and 6 rated 0, and Item 8 rated -). Averaging gave each of these subjects a relational concern rating of 5.

The final totals of ratings of subject's partners on the RCM were as follows: two ratings of 8, seven ratings of 7, two ratings of 6, five ratings of 5, five ratings of 4, seven ratings of 3, five ratings of 2, and three ratings of 1. The mean rating was 4.33 and the standard deviation was 2.11. No sex effect was evident in the data. Ratings were evenly distributed across the sexes. Of interest, however, is the high number of relational concern ratings in the 6, 7, and 8 range (a total of eleven ratings at these levels).

Associations between Functional Communication Behaviors and Ratings of Relational Concern

Freeman' Coefficient of Differentiation (θ) was computed for all subjects and their ratings on the RCM across the ten communication categories. The resulting coefficient is an index of the degree of association. Table 1| presents the results of this analysis. The overall association between functional communication behaviors and relational concern ratings was determined by obtaining the average θ value for the ten categories. This value was .51 and indicates that there is a 51% association between enactment of the functional communication behaviors and ratings on the RCM. Higher θ values for specific categories of behavior indicate that certain functional behaviors are more powerful predictors of perceived relational concern. Negative affective behaviors (θ = .86) were most highly associated with subject's ranking on the RCM (see Table 1|).

Conflict Situation Manipulations

All subjects responded affirmatively to several questions designed to assess the validity of the conflict situation manipulations. Subjects indicated that they understood the case study and their responsibilities and that the mixed-motive conflict format imposed by the case study was successful. Finally, all subjects responded affirmatively to questions designed to determine whether or not they perceived themselves as being in a conflict-like situation.

Discussion

The basic question addressed by this research was, do varying styles of the functional communication behaviors affect post interaction impressions of relational concern in interpersonal

conflict? Several research questions and hypotheses were posed: (1) can communication functions be identified by interaction observers, (2) does the enactment of communication functions change across time, (3) can social interactants identify another's level of relational concern, (4) do communication functions affect post interaction impressions of relational dynamics,and (5) is relational concern a part of these relational dynamics? The results of this investigation provides some insights into each of these considerations.

Within the design of this research, the primary question was answered affirmatively, i.e., functional communication behaviors are strongly associated with perceived levels of relational concern. Each of the subsidiary questions is also answered affirmatively, but the degree of affirmation varies through the several categories and phases of the research.

An average association of 51% was found between the functional communication behaviors and perceived relational concern (as assessed by the RCM). High coder agreement was demonstrated for the functional communication categories, and the coding system was considered exhaustive for communication function in interpersonal conflict. Analysis of the relationship between functional communication behaviors and post interaction impressions of relational concern yielded several specific types of functional communication behaviors which were accurate predictors of relational concern. Within a conflict, subjects were able to sort functional communication behaviors by level of relational concern. The incremental nature of this relational information was supported by the Guttman

scaling of the behaviors. The high Coefficient of Reproducability (.97) for the final scale indicates that the scale is generalizable. Further, this coefficient supports Miller (1973) and Fodor's (1977) notion that the type-token association between specific behaviors and classes of behaviors can be demonstrated. Subjects were able to supply a conflict context from memory and apply a personal metric to the observed behaviors in order to determine levels of relational concern. The coefficient of scalability and the correlation coefficients generated for the final RCM suggest that subject impressions of levels of relational concern are not unidimensional. The coefficient of scalability (.78) is within acceptable limits, but suggests that the scale itself is not totally internally consistent. Overall, the eight-item Guttman Scale taps a range of behaviors suggestive of relational conern.

Generally, the results of this investigation support the viability of the functional communication category schema and may be added to those of other investigations. Specifically, functional communication behavior use norms may be developed. For example, Spear et al. (1977) found that extended tacts, echoics, and negative affective autoclitics were used significantly less frequently by males and females in task situations. Additionally, males used more positive affective autoclitics in task situations, while females used more positive affective behaviors in non-task situations. In this investigation, only the echoic category was a nonsignificant contributor to the overall between-subject differences. Generally, subjects in this study were less apt to exhibit positive affective behaviors, tacts, and extended tacts than any other communication function. In the case of the positive affective autoclitics, the

nature of the mixed-motive conflict may have been influential. Within the mixed motive design, subjects are assumed to be motivated to pursue their own goals in resolving the conflict (Gallo & McClintock, 1965). If subjects behave as expected, then positive affective behaviors would serve to reinforce an opponent's position while weakening the personal position. This is in fact what appears to have happened in the conflict dyads. Interactants were reluctant to react positively to the other participant's reasons for winning the conflict. The relatively low frequency of the tact and extended tact categories may be attributed to two factors. First, the sterile environment of the experimental situation allowed the subjects little opportunity to react to the physical environment. Second, the nature of the case study required the interactants to spend most of their time on their personal goals, rather than referring to the other person's comments. The majority of tacts functioned to direct attention to the conflict stimulus. The overall changes in the use frequency of functional communication behaviors over time are a richer source of information about specific category dynamics. Before examination of time changes in category use, however, one weakness of the functional communication category scheme deserves consideration.

The primary research question (Do differences in the use of functional communication behaviors distinguish between levels of post interaction impressions of relational concern in interpersonal conflict?) was answered in two ways. After determination of differences in the use of functional communication behaviors and differences in levels of post interaction relational concern, the

experimental results were examined on a dyad by dyad basis for possible relationships between relational concern ratings and frequency of communication function category use. Second, the overall category use at each level of relational concern was examined, and Freeman's Coefficient of Differentiation was computed to determine the strength of association between variables.

In the dyad by dyad analysis, fourteen of the eighteen dyads ($p < .05$, and ten of eighteen at $p < .01$) had significant X^2 values across the ten categories of functional communication behaviors (see Table 9). When compared to the subject's ratings on the RCM , it was found that nonsignificant differences between subjects' use of functional communication behaviors were matched by equal or nearly equal ratings on the RCM. Examination of the level by level use of functional communication behaviors (see Table 10) gives the possible behavioral profile of interactants leading to their post interaction ratings.

Dyad 1 was characterized by a significant difference between the subjects' use of the functional communication behaviors. Subject 1 was rated by subject 2 as being at level 4 on the RCM, while subject 2 was rated a level 7 on the RCM. Differences between levels 7 and 4 included more enactments of dominant control behaviors on level 4 than 7, more enactments of negative affective behaviors on level 4 than 7 (see Table 11). Dyad 1 is a prototypic example of the dyads in which significant differences in use of funcational communication behaviors were matched by differences in RCM ratings.

Dyad 7 was typical of those dyads in which a nonsignificant difference in the use of the functional communication categories

was matched by the same or nearly same (within one level) rating of the subjects on the RCM. In dyad 7, both subjects rated each other as being at level 5 on the RCM (see Table 10). Inspection of Table 7 indicates that differences between these individual subjects were minimal and that both were consistent in the pattern of use for level 5 (see Table 11). All dyads which were not significantly different in frequency of functional communication category use were within one rating level on the RCM. That is, the direct association between category use and RCM ratings was confirmed across all dyads.

This type of analysis yielded two findings of interest. First, the RCM rating pattern, as matched to the frequency of use of the functional communication behaviors, was stable across all dyads, as in the two examples cited. Second, since four of the eight dyads which were found to be non-significantly different in functional communication behavior use fell into the within one level apart category, further examination of these four dyads was conducted. Of the four dyads, three involved levels 3 and 4, and one involved levels 1 and 2. Two possible explanations for these findings are that, subjects had difficulty discriminating between these levels, expecially 3 and 4, or there was no significant difference between these levels in functional communication category use.

The first explanation is suggested by the final profile of the RCM. It was proposed in the discussion of the RCM that its lower than desired Coefficient of Scalability may be due to the closeness of some of the scale items, particularly 3 and 4 and 1 and 2. Two factors suggest the problem of discriminability between levels

3/4 and 1/2 lies in scale items 1 and 4. First, one of the dyads in the same rating group had both subjects rated at level 3, and one of the dyads in this group had both subjects rated at level 2 on the RCM. These levels were conceptuallly clear, at least in these dyads. Second, a post hoc X^2 analysis of the category use across the levels of the RCM was conducted. All comparisons were significant ($p < .05$) except between levels 1 and 2 and 3 and 4. The comparisons between levels 2 and 3, 4 and 5, 5 and 6, 6 and 7, and 7 and 8 all revealed significant intralevel differences in the use of functional communication behaviors. Since it was not possible to infer causal relationships from the comparisons, it was simply concluded that these were co-occurring phenomena and that the RCM should be further developed and adjusted for use in future investigations.

Several tentative conclusions concerning six of the levels of relational concern may be drawn. A profile of functional communication behavior at each of the independent RCM levels can be developed. The data displayed in Table 1 characterize each level of relational concern with the mean category frequencies for the individual levels. The functional communication "style" of persons perceived at the highest level of relational concern, compared to all other levels, used the mand, dominant control, and negative affective least often while using submissive control and positive affective behaviors most often. Persons at level 8 were also comparatively high in their use of tacts, extended tacts, and intraverbals. This finding is consistent with most contemporary models of conflict behavior (Filley, 1975; Ruble and Thomas, 1976; Hall, 1969). The models predict that persons recognized as highly concerned

about relationship maintenance are attentive, highly reinforcing, and convey a feeling of trust (high self-disclosure).

The significant difference between levels 7 and 8 was attributable to reductions or increases in the dominant control, negative affective, and submissive control categories. Persons at level 7 engaged in more dominant control and negative affective behaviors than persons at level 8. Between these levels there was also a reduction in the use of submissive control behaviors. Persons at level 7 of the RCM seemed to maintain their higher ratings by offsetting the increases in dominant and negative behaviors with high frequency of positive behavior use. Level 6 persons demonstrated a drop in positive affective responses and a corresponding increase in negative affective responses. The reward-punishment style of interactions perceived high in relational concern seemed to be the strongest determinant of relational concern rating.

Persons perceived at level 5 on the RCM demonstrated increased usage of mands and dominant control behaviors, while continuing the upward trend in frequency of negative affective behaviors and the downward trend of positive affective behaviors. Subjects may have been discriminating between levels 5 and 6 on the basis of a control dimension. The more frequent presentation of adjacency pairs (a class of mands) and questions may have been viewed in concert with overt dominant control behaviors as attempts to manipulate the flow of the interaction. This is a curious contrast to the mean frequency of submissive control behaviors for level 5. Persons at level 5 spent more time in listening and submissive control behaviors than did those at any other relational concern level.

Four categories seem to distinguish persons rated at level 4 from level 5 persons: extended tacts, intraverbals, informative autoclitics, and submissive

control autoclitics. Persons rated 4 in relational concern exhibited the second highest levels of extended tacts and submissive control behaviors. Further, level 4 persons approximated the median frequency of negative affective responses across all levels. The functional communication style of persons perceived in the mid-range of relational concern seem to be persons who exhibit moderately high levels of controlling behaviors, are moderately negative, and moderately self disclosing. The outstanding characteristic of persons at this level was that they exhibited considerably less informative behavior than persons at level 5. It is interesting that the mean response frequency of informative behaviors is less than 1 for persons at or above level 8. The common sense interpretation of this finding suggests that persons see others as more concerned with relationship maintenance if, while they are not giving information, they frequently display positive affective responses.

The differences between levels 3 and 4 were non-significant. The only categorical difference between the two levels seems to be a sharp increase in informatives over level 4. Level 3 had the highest mean frequency of mand responses: however, it was only .1 over level 4. The slight increase in negative affective and positive affective behaviors confused these findings further. As indicated in the discussion of the dyad by dyad ratings, some combination of the level 3 and 4 functional communication behavior uses may provide the best profile of persons in the mid to below mid range of relational concern.

The functional communication behaviors which were determined to have a 50% or better association with the RCM were: extended tacts, intraverbals, dominant control, negative affective and positive affective autoclitics (see Table 12). Of these, negative affective behaviors are the strongest predictors of perceived relational concern. Phillips and Thompson (1977) offer a possible interpretation of these outcomes when they maintain that in the conceptual organization of any

relationship persons identify two primary dimensions of their relationships with others: a reward dimension and a control dimension. These are combined to define relationships as either "positive control relations" or "negative control relations" (p. 166). This conceptualization suggests that the dominant control/submissive control and negative/affective behaviors should be the strongest predictors of relational impressions. The strength of the negative affective behaviors in this investigation is attributable to the specific relational area under investigation. Relational concern is strongly affected by negative responses over other types of responses. Similarly, dominant control behaviors appear to be more important than submissive control behaviors in determinations of relational control.

Discussion of changes in the use frequency of extended tacts indicates that persons used extended tacts to argue logical inconsistencies in the statements of others. Applicaton of Freeman's Coefficient of Differentiation (1965) indicated that extended tacts had the second highest assoication with ratings of relational concern.

The intraverbal category closely followed expectations about the amount of self disclosure and levels of relational concern. The final θ value for this response group was .54, which indicated that correct predictions of impressions of relational concern, given the level of intraverbal use, can be made 54 percent of the time. Although intraverbals were not clear discriminators between the extreme levels of relational concern, this category was a major discriminator for the mid-range levels on the RCM. The final θ value for this category and the differences in use of this category across RCM levels argues for a curvilinear rather than a linear model of self disclosure in post conflict impressions of relational concern. Gilbert (1976) explains that when using a satisfaction scale over an amount of self disclosure scale, the amount of self

disclosure should peak at some point than decline for a moderately intimate relationship or relational dissatisfaction results (p. 209). Examination of Table 12 indicates that intraverbals increased from level 8 to level 6 where use peaked, and then declined at level 5. The model proposed by Gilbert would predict that any increases after this decline would be met by increased dissatisfaction with the relationship. This appears to have happened as intraverbal activity increased at levels 3 and 1. Future research using the intraverbal category of communication function might benefit from subdivision of this category into types of self disclosure used in the conflict interaction.

Conclusion

The basic premise of this investigation, that communication functions are instrumental indicators of pragmatic relational information, has been supported. Since post interaction impressions of relational concern were shown to be related to functional communication behaviors, styles of presentation of communication function affect pragmatic relational perceptions of interactants. Specifically, it was found that social actors can discriminate between levels of relational concern in interpersonal conflict. Communicators in interpersonal conflict use differing presentational styles of communication function. The levels of communication function change over time during conflict interactions. The differing styles of use of communication function are related to levels of perceived relational concern. Finally, the results of this study suggest that normative data can be developed for functional communication behavior in interpersonal conflict and the association between functional communication cues and relational impressions.

NOTES

[1] The Phase II case study was as follows: "While on the beach in Florida during Spring Break you were mistakenly busted with a group of dope dealers who happened to be near you on the beach. You are now in jail. You want to get out without anyone, especially your parents, finding out about the bust. You have discovered that if you and your partner pool your money <u>one</u> of you can get out. The other must stay for thirty days, probably miss finals, and have a low GPA this semester. In the next fifteen minutes try and decide which one of you will get out. Remember, it takes all the money both of you have to get one person out. If you both don't contribute your money, then both of you will stay the thirty days. Take your time and try to come to a decision.

Table 1

STATEMENTS SUBMITTED TO INITIAL TEST GROUP FOR RELATIONAL CONCERN RATING

1. Behavior that indicates that one is right and the other is wrong in the conflict.
2. Behavior that indicates tht the other person's inadequacies are the cause of the conflict.
3. Behavior that indicates that one's own inadequacies are the source of the conflict.
4. Behavior that indicates that an unsatisfactory resolution of the conflict will lead to problems in the relationship between the conflicting parties.
5. An indication that if the other will give-in now the person will give-in in some future conflict.
6. Behavior that attempts to separate the conflict from the relationship between the conflicting parties.
7. Behavior that indicates that no matter how the conflict proceeds it will not affect how one party feels about the other.
8. An attempt to become physically violent in solving the conflict.
9. Behavior that attempts to lay the blame for the conflict on the other person.

Table 1 (continued)

10. Behavior that indicates that the conflict is making the person very upset.
11. Behavior that indicates that one is concerned with how upset the other person is becomiing.
12. Behavior that indicates that anything the other person decides is an acceptable solution to the conflict.
13. Behavior that indicates that because one person cares about the other person that person will concede in the conflict.
14. Behavior that indicates that criticism of one's ideas will be taken as personal criticism.
15. Behavior indicating that finding more information might help resolve the conflict.
16. An attempt to break off the conversation in order to end the conflict.
17. Behavior indicating that one is suspicious of the other's information in the conflict.
18. An attempt to solve the conflict by flipping a coin to determine who is "right" in the conflict.
19. Behavior that indicates attempts to find the best solution to the conflict no matter how the conflicting parties feel.

Table 1 (continued)

20. Behavior that indicates that a person does not care what the other person thinks about a controversial issue.
21. Indications that the other person's information is better on a controversial issue in question.
22. Behavior that indicates that if one person cared about the other then he/she would not disagree with the person.
23. Indications that another person should make a sacrifice to settle a conflict.
24. Indications that the other person's feelings are of primary concern in the resolution of the conflict.
25. A suggestion that some authority figure resolve the conflict for the conflicting parties.

Table 2

FINAL RELATIONAL CONCERN MEASURE ITEMS

1.	Behavior that indicates that one is right and the other is wrong in the conflict.
5.	An indication that if the other will give-in now the person will give-in in some future conflict.
9.	Behavior that attempts to lay the blame for the conflict on the other person.
10.	Behavior that indicates that the conflict is making the other person very upset.
11.	Behavior that indicates that one is concerned with how upset the other is becoming.
13.	Behavior that indicates that because one person cares about the other person that person will concede in the conflict.
14.	Behavior that indicates that criticism of one's ideas will be taken as personal criticism.
19.	Behavior that indicates attempts to find the best solution to the conflict no matter how the conflicting parties feel.
20.	Behavior that indicates that a person does not care what the other person thinks about a controversial issue.
24.	Indications that the other person's feelings are of primary concern in resolution of the conflict.

TABLE 3

CATEGORY SYSTEM FOR THE ANALYSIS OF

FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION

Operant categories	Definitions	Examples- Behaviors included
1. Mand	A verbal operant in which the response is reinforced by a characteristic consequence The response is therefore under the functional control of relevant conditions of deprivation or aversive stimulation	Vocal 1. "Can you tell me what your name is?" 2. "Forget about that." 3. "Let's stop avoiding the task." Nonvocal 4. Questioning glances. 5. Directing gestures, of command, etc.
2. Tact	A verbal operant in which a response of given form is evoked (or at least strengthened) by the actual presence of a particular object, or event, or property of an object or event.	Vocal 1. "His chair is vacant." 2. "The group is anxious." 3. "Here in this room." Nonvocal 4. Any acknowledgement of an object, or ongoing activity, referred to by gestures.

3. Extended Tact	A verbal operant in which a response is generated by physical properties of objects and events where the association between the speaker's behavior and the physical properties in not commonly reinforced by the particular verbal community.	Vocal 1. "It's a bloody morgue (referring to the group situation). 2. "The preacher said so" (referring to the therapist). Nonvocal 3. Ritualized bowing to the group leader (the gestures are not entirely appropriate to the object actually being responded to).
4. Echoic	A verbal operant in which the response is under the control of verbal stimuli such that the response has formal properties precisely the same as the stimulus.	Vocal 1. Any spoken repetition. 2. Laughter which follows closely an initial burst of mirth Nonvocal 3. Modelling of postures, gestures, etc. by some other participant.
5. Intraverbal	A verbal operant in which the response is thematically related, but shows no point-to-point correspondence to the verbal stimulus.	Vocal 1. "We have certain expectations" (follows upon "The group is waiting for something to happen"). 2. "We share a few laughs" (part of an anecdote about friends). Nonvocal 3. Stretching and yawning (behaviors occur during a monologue on fatigue.

31 - a

31 - b

6. Dominant control	A verbal operant which calls attention to the speaker or what he is saying.	Vocal 1. "Now." 2. "So." 3. "Well ah'm." Nonvocal 4. Leaning forward, or leaning back in chair (attention getting). 5. Pause for effect.
7. Negative affective	A verbal operant which indicates a negative emotional reaction to what has been said.	Vocal 1. "No fear!" 2. "I doubt it very much!" Nonvocal 3. Cutting across the flow of communication with a disruptive gesture. 4. Looking away from the speaker 5. Clicking a cigarette lighter when someone else is speaking.
8. Informative autoclitic	A verbal operant which clarifies or alters the effect of a given communication but does so without any indication of emotion.	Vocal 1. "I see where...." 2. "On the other hand...." 3. "However, it could be...." 4. "I wish...." etc. Nonvocal 5. Any dramatization or gesture which clarifies other verbal behaviors, e.g., a shrug which accompanies the word "confusion."

9. Submissive control	A verbal operant which indicates passive acceptance.	Vocal 1. A bland "Yes." Nonvocal 2. Attentive listening postures. 3. Direct and continuing eye contact with speaker.
10. Positive affective	A verbal operant which indicates a positive reaction to what has been said.	Vocal 1. "I agree." 2. "Definitely." Nonvocal 3. Smiling 4. Nodding 5. Laughing at a joke, etc.

From McLeish and Martin, 1975.

TABLE 4

POST INTERACTION RCM AND

MANIPULATION CHECK

Read each statement carefully and mark how well the question applies to your partner in this interaction. You will mark each statement as follows: + (this means that your partner was better than the statement) - (this means that your partner was worse than the statement) or 0 (this means your partner is the same as the statement). Each statement is the description of some behavior which persons might engage in during interpersonal communication. You should rate your partner according to how you feel he or she might compare to persons who engage in the behaviors in the statements. For example, given the statement, "This person might resort to violence to solve an argument," you would rate your partner as + which would indicate that he or she would not do this type of behavior, 0 which would indicate that this person would do this type of behavior, or - which would indicate that your partner might engage in more extreme types of behavior.

_____1. This person had no intention of letting me win this conflict.

_____2. This person would attempt to find the best solution to the conflict matter how the other person feels.

_____3. This person would take the other person's feeings as a primary concern in a conflict.

_____4. This person is the type who would not care what another person thought about a controversial issue in a conflict.

_____5. This person would try to buy off competitors in a conflict.

_____6. This is the type of person that would tell you that if you really cared how he or she felt than you would concede in the conflict.

_____7. This is the type of person who tries to blame the problem on the other person.

_____8. This is the type of person who probably wins more than loses conflicts.

_____9. This is the type of person who would become very concerned if the conflict made the other person very upset.

_____10. This is the type of person who take criticism of ideas as personal criticism.

Please answer the following questions by checking yes or no.

1. Did you understand that you and your partner were being asked to find the best solution to your dilemma? Yes___ No___

2. Did you understand that you and your partner were competing to see who will win the greatest advantage? Yes___ No___
3. Did you undersand that there were mutually unobtainable objectives and that you could impose punishments on the other person: Yes___ No___
4. Did you see yourself in conflict with the other person? Yes___ No___
5. Did you see this situation as typical of some of the conflicts you find yourself in? Yes___ No___

TABLE 5

MEAN RATINGS OF TEN SELECTED

RELATIONAL CONCERN ITEMS

Item[a]	Mean Rating[b]
1	1.7
5	4.5
9	1.3
10	5.2
11	7.8
13	6.0
14	3.1
19	4.2
20	2.3
24	7.1

[a]Items correspond to Table 1, pp. 30-32.
[b]N = 40

TABLE 6

COMPOSITE RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS

FOR FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION

BEHAVIOR CODERS

Dyad	Subject	Reliability Coefficient*
1	1	.84
	2	.79
2	3	.90
	4	.86
3	5	.76
	6	.81
4	7	.83
	8	.83
5	9	.95
	10	.79
6	11	.88
	12	.90
7	13	.82
	14	.76
8	15	.89
	16	.78
9	17	.91
	18	.86
10	19	.94
	20	.90
11	21	.78
	22	.80
12	23	.87
	24	.82
13	25	.83
	26	.91
14	27	.90
	28	.92
15	29	.79
	30	.85
16	31	.91
	32	.85
17	33	.78
	34	.80
18	35	.93
	36	.88

*Based on three coders per subject.

TABLE 7

FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE OF FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS PER DYAD AND SUBJECT

Dyad	Subject	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1	12	7	10	3	20	27	23	19	50	9
	2	10	10	6	4	34	10	4	24	61	17
2	3	17	7	4	5	20	20	34	27	41	5
	4	8	12	20	3	15	10	9	31	52	20
3	5	11	18	8	5	20	10	8	28	48	24
	6	20	9	11	3	7	32	15	20	49	14
4	7	10	13	10	4	25	14	6	31	46	21
	8	19	6	3	7	10	20	10	23	58	24
5	9	20	18	9	1	17	31	20	15	39	10
	10	4	3	21	5	31	3	10	39	49	15
6	11	22	10	1	2	18	24	20	22	51	10
	12	23	15	2	2	6	33	20	12	59	8
7	13	13	7	8	3	14	8	11	54	58	4
	14	22	9	6	1	9	16	7	36	71	3
8	15	6	1	8	1	16	5	1	29	86	27
	16	6	4	4	2	7	27	30	50	43	7
9	17	6	8	20	1	18	19	14	28	51	15
	18	14	3	1	2	12	25	10	62	24	27
10	19	21	12	8	4	20	10	20	39	31	15
	20	12	3	2	1	9	27	14	44	66	2
11	21	21	11	5	2	6	18	11	57	48	1
	22	14	9	6	1	20	12	20	46	46	6
12	23	6	17	13	3	18	24	31	31	26	11
	24	12	9	1	2	39	9	10	38	47	13
13	25	17	7	4	1	13	33	20	35	46	4
	26	6	14	10	8	32	13	8	26	47	16
14	27	20	6	1	1	1	19	37	28	51	16
	28	14	2	1	2	12	19	11	44	62	13
15	29	17	2	1	1	13	16	25	41	59	5
	30	12	10	1	2	12	32	20	38	49	4
16	31	19	10	8	2	14	30	31	38	20	8
	32	10	11	4	1	17	36	24	30	44	3
17	33	13	7	8	1	16	8	11	34	78	4
	34	20	11	6	3	7	16	17	46	51	3
18	35	17	11	5	1	10	30	23	41	30	12
	36	19	11	1	1	11	21	30	43	40	3

1 = Mand, 2 = Tact, 3 = Extended Tact, 4 = Echoic,
5 = Intraverbal, 6 = Dominant Control,
7 = Negative Affective, 8 = Informative,
9 = Submissive Control, 10 = Positive Affective

TABLE 8

X^2 VALUES FOR EACH OF THE TEN FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

Functional Communication Behavior	X^2	df	p = .05
Mand	78.83	35	S
Tact	77.40	35	S
Extended Tact	154.78	35	S
Echoic	43.07	35	NS
Intraverbal	154.68	35	S
Dominant Control	149.19	35	S
Negative Affective	167.79	35	S
Informative	132.82	35	S
Submissive Control	135.76	35	S
Positive Affective	176.24	35	S

TABLE 9

X^2 VALUES FOR TEN FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS PER DYAD ACROSS THE EIGHTEEN DYADS

Dyad	X^2	$\alpha = .05$[a]	$\alpha = .01$[a]
1	28.98	S	S
2	44.88	S	S
3	30.49	S	S
4	21.22	S	NS
5	72.13	S	S
6	12.52	NS	NS
7	13.55	NS	NS
8	80.92	S	S
9	51.67	S	S
10	49.17	S	S
11	18.16	S	NS
12	47.18	S	S
13	46.01	S	S
14	31.72	S	S
15	13.61	NS	NS
16	18.45	S	NS
17	19.16	S	NS
18	12.21	NS	NS

[a]df = 9 for each comparison

TABLE 10

FINAL RANKING OF SUBJECTS ON RELATIONAL CONCERN MEASURE

Subject	Rank
1	4
2	7
3	1
4	7
5	8
6	5
7	7
8	7
9	4
10	7
11	4
12	3
13	5
14	5
15	8
16	2
17	6
18	7
19	3
20	5
21	4
22	3
23	1
24	6
25	2
26	7
27	3
28	5
29	3
30	3
31	2
32	2
33	4
34	3
35	2
36	1

TABLE 11

FREEMAN'S COEFFICIENT OF DIFFERENTIATION FOR DEGREE OF ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS AND THE RCM

Functional Communication Behavior	θ
Mand	.47
Tact	.35
Extended Tact	.68
Echoic	.17
Intraverbal	.54
Dominant Control	.56
Negative Affective	.86
Informative	.38
Submissive Control	.41
Positive Affective	.65

TABLE 12

SUMMARY OF MEAN RESPONSES ON TEN FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS AT EACH LEVEL OF RELATIONAL CONCERN

RCM Level	n	Categories[a] 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8	2	8.5	9.5	8.0	3.0	18.0	7.5	4.5	28.5	67.0	25.5
7	7	10.1	8.7	10.1	4.7	22.7	13.6	8.1	33.7	48.1	20.0
6	2	9.0	8.5	10.5	1.5	23.5	14.0	12.0	33.0	49.0	14.0
5	5	16.6	6.2	3.6	1.8	12.4	18.8	12.6	40.0	61.6	6.4
4	5	17.6	10.6	6.6	1.8	15.4	21.6	17.0	29.4	53.2	6.8
3	7	17.7	9.4	4.0	2.0	18.2	21.7	20.3	51.4	48.7	8.1
2	5	13.8	8.6	5.0	1.4	12.2	31.2	25.6	38.8	36.6	6.8
1	3	14.0	11.6	6.0	3.0	16.3	31.7	31.7	33.7	35.7	6.3

[a]1 = Mand, 2 = Tact, 3 = Extended Tact, 4 = Echoic, 5 = Intraverbal, 6 = Dominant Control, 7 = Negative Affective, 8 = Informative, 9 = Submissive Control, 10 = Positive Affective

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